

City of Milwaukee Infant Mortality and Disparities Fact Sheet

In 2002 in Milwaukee 134 infants died before their first birthday. The 2002 infant mortality rate is 12.5 deaths per 1000 live births. In the United States more than 28,000 infants died before their first birthday in 2002.¹ The infant mortality rate in the United States is 7.0 per 1000 live births. The U.S infant mortality rate is higher than that in 27 other nations.

Infant mortality rates in Milwaukee vary based on race and ethnicity.

- **The 2002 infant mortality rate² per 1000 live births for babies born to:**
 - African Americans was 18.7
 - Hispanics was 8.6
 - Whites was 6.4
- **Racial and ethnic disparities**
 - Nearly three (3) African American infants died for every White or Hispanic infant that died.
- **African Americans**
 - ✓ African American infants are nearly three (3) times as likely to die before their first birthday.
 - ✓ African American infant death drives the infant mortality rate in the City of Milwaukee.
 - ✓ The rate of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) among African Americans is 2.3 times that of Whites.
 - ✓ In Milwaukee, 55% more African American babies died because they were born prematurely (too soon) than among any other racial or ethnic groups
 - ✓ Four (4) African American infants were victims of homicide in 2002
- **Hispanics**
 - ✓ The Hispanic infant death rate has increased to 8.6 in 2002. It was 5.8 in 2001.
 - ✓ Hispanic infants died at twice the rate of White infants because they were born too soon.
- **Whites**
 - ✓ The White infant mortality rate is 6.4. This is in contrast to an overall downward trend for the past five (5) years.
 - ✓ The SIDS rate for White infants in Milwaukee was twice the rate seen in the State of Wisconsin.

Some potential reasons for disparities in infant mortality:

- **Lack of Prenatal Care**
 - 65.3% of women without prenatal care were African American. More than twice as many African American women did not receive any prenatal care than both Hispanic and White women combined.
- **Early Prenatal Care**
 - Only 71% of African American women and 66% of Hispanic women started prenatal care in the 1st trimester. 87% of White women began their prenatal care in the 1st trimester.
- **Cigarette Smoking**
 - 16.4% of African American women smoked during their pregnancy; 3% more than the percentage for of all mothers giving birth in 2002. Mothers who smoke during pregnancy are at a 2.5x greater risk of ectopic pregnancy, 4x greater risk of miscarriage, 1.5x greater risk of stillbirth³ and at a 3x greater risk for a child dying of SIDS. Even mothers who breathe second-hand smoke have a 2.5x greater risk of SIDS.
- **Prematurity**
 - 13.2% of all African American infants were born premature in 2002. This is 30% more than either White or Hispanic premature births.

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- **Unintended pregnancy**
 - Births resulting from unwanted conceptions may suffer from elevated risks of infant mortality and low birth weight. In a 1996 Prenatal Care Survey by the State of Wisconsin, African American women indicated 78% of their births were unintended as opposed to 35% of White women and 54% of Hispanic women.⁴

Sudden Infant Death in Milwaukee⁵

- ✓ Of the 16 cases of Sudden Infant Death in Milwaukee in 2002, 11 were African American infants and 8 were identified with an unsafe sleep environment as a contributing factor.
- ✓ Babies who sleep on their stomach have a 5x greater risk of SIDS.
- ✓ Babies who sleep in an adult bed have a 20x greater risk of SIDS.
- ✓ Babies who are appropriately put to sleep on their backs and then are put to sleep on their tummies have an 18-20x greater risk of SIDS.
- ✓ 31% of Milwaukee residents and 43.9% of African American questioned in the 2001 Greater Milwaukee Survey still believe that a putting a baby to sleep on their tummy is safe.
- ✓ Babies who are exposed to second hand smoke have a 2x greater risk of SIDS.

Access to Care Issues as identified at the 2003 Healthy Babies in Wisconsin Summit

- ✓ Women and families have a lack of knowledge of healthcare programs and eligibility requirements.
- ✓ There are not enough providers willing to care for clients of low economic status.
- ✓ There are a lack of services for underinsured, uninsured and undocumented women and families.
- ✓ There is a need for culturally appropriate care which will lead to provider and client trust.
- ✓ There is a need for expanded service hours.
- ✓ Often patients will not be seen unless their bill is totally paid.
- ✓ Mothers are afraid of losing their baby due to a past history with the Bureau of Child Welfare, so they delay seeking prenatal care until the very end.
- ✓ Teens may hide their pregnancy until it is time to deliver because they do not want to disclose the pregnancy to their parents.

Pediatric Care Issues

- ✓ Only 74.5% of one year olds were up-to-date on their immunizations, as identified by a 2003 Clinical Assessment Software application analysis.
- ✓ 23% of African American infants who died in 2000-2001 did not see a physician.⁶

Resources

¹ National center for Health Statistics, provisional 2002 data
² 2002 Birth Data: State level data, DHFS, WISH; City level data, City of Milwaukee Health Department
³ First Breath Program Facts, State of Wisconsin
⁴ DHFS, Bureau of Health Information (1999): The 1996 Prenatal Care Survey Report.
⁵ Infant Death Center of Wisconsin data
⁶ <http://www.milwaukee.gov/citygov/health/fimr>

Note: All race and ethnicity references in this document are defined:



White=Non-Hispanic White
Black=Non-Hispanic Black
Hispanic= Includes all races, Hispanic ethnicity